



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL  
1230 YORK AVENUE · NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021

PHYSICIAN-IN-CHIEF

13 June 1980

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
President  
The Rockefeller University

Dear Josh:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I sent to Dr. Leschly at Squibb and the several reprints on steroid pharmacology enclosed with it.

Incidentally, I think that it was Hans Selye, who can be credited with the first solid evidence that steroid metabolites have biological properties independent of their precursor hormones; specifically it was he who discovered the anesthetic effect of certain  $5\beta$  metabolites of sex steroids. This work is reviewed in my Pharmacological Reviews report.

I think our own serendipitous discovery of the pyrogenic effect of steroids was probably the first demonstration in humans of the concept that steroid metabolites are not inert degradation products of the hormones from which they are derived, but may have novel and independent biological properties of their own. Dr. Hamburg remembered my name in connection with that work which naturally enhanced my already great admiration for him. The recent work in estrogens by Jack is an elegant extension of this idea and it may yet turn out that endocrinologists will come to believe what pharmacologists have known for some time - i.e. that no chemical can be considered to be devoid of potential biological action until it finally disappears into the excreta.

*how*  
Sometime at your leisure I'll tell you the story of how I discovered the pyrogenic actions of  $5\beta$  steroids - and what it cost me in actual dollars in a poker game we were having at the Yale Club, the evening of the day in which I took the first injection of the  $5\beta$  steroid etiocholanolone.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

*Kapp*  
Attallah Kappas, M.D. *↓*

Encl.